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DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION  
DOCKET SECTION

December 15, 1997

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The Honorable Rodney Slater, Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
Docket Section PL 401  
400 Seventh St. S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Mr. Slater:

RE: Docket #OST 97-2557 - 53

This letter comes concerning your consideration of AirTran Airway's application for landing slots at New York's LaGuardia Airport.

Measuring the potential market for a Bloomington/Normal (Central Illinois) to New York route by only estimating the needs of Bloomington/Normal is inaccurate. Recent analysis by the Boyd Group supports the information our local Visitors and Convention Bureau staff already knows. Bloomington/Normal draws people from a sixty-mile radius and the airport draws even further. The proposed route, according to the Boyd report, would have 70,000 passengers per year. This number is significantly higher than the 15,000 your office estimated using only the immediate geographical area of Bloomington/Normal.

There are many school, non-profit, and educational groups as well as individuals who annually organize and develop trips to and from the New York area. Quite a number of these organizations are from the smaller towns around Bloomington/Normal. They all have to arrange transportation to and from Chicago's O'Hare or Midway airports from their communities at an additional cost to the traveler. With O'Hare's current activity level, Midway's activity climbing and the constant road construction around the Chicago area to accommodate the airport traffic, these trips are currently add 2 ½ to 3 ½ hours traveling time. By having the Bloomington/Normal Regional Airport route to LaGuardia you would create more travel opportunities for all the businesses, individuals and groups who would like to be able to reach New York easily.

I strongly urge you to consider your decision regarding Docket OST 97-2557. The information provided by the Boyd Group as well as the recent success of AirTran's Orlando route and Frontier's Denver route clearly indicates that Bloomington/Normal would provide a market adequate to support a Bloomington/Normal to New York City route.

Sincerely,



J. Kathleen Parrish

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